

## MINISTUDY The Forgotten Law of Financial Success

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Few people realize that financial success is governed by a living, dynamic law of God. Still fewer actually believe God's promise to bless those who comply with that law.

You can't afford to be unaware of this fundamental law of financial success -- and of this law's spiritual implications! Lets understand the biblical truth about this forgotten law of God.

1. Does God reveal Himself as the Creator and Owner of all that we see around us? John 1:1-3, Ps. :4:1. Job 41:1 1. Does ail the gold and silver belong to God? Hag. ':8.

God created everything, and by virtue of that creation He owns it all. Therefore God also owns everything man produces on God's earth.

God's financial law can be compared to a contract. He wants us to understand that we are working with Him in a partnership. But how?

The Creator allows us to live and work on the earth - to cultivate the land and produce the food we eat. He allows us to use His raw materials in producing the many products we use. But God requires us to return to Him a small portion of what we produce and earn. And when we understand, that small portion is, in turn. actually spent for the benefit of mankind.

2. Was the patriarch Abraham obedient to God? Gen. 26:5. How did he honor the Creator and Owner of all things? Gen. 14:17-20, Heb. 7:1-4. Was Abraham blessed? Heb. 7:6.

Abraham was a tither! He gave a tenth part (tithe means "tenth") of the spoils of battle to Melchizedek, God's representative on earth at that time. The context of the verses we read in Genesis shows that God received His part before any further disposition of the goods was made to others. Abraham thus acknowledged that God was the source of all his blessings.

3. Was Melchizedek God's minister? Gen. 14:18, Heb. 7:1.

Tithing is revealed in the Bible as God's system for financing His ministry. Hundreds of years before the Levitical priesthood, the ministry was that of Melchizedek, who was none other than the member of the God Family who later became Jesus Christ.

Melchizedek was God's representative on earth during patriarchal times, and He received tithes from God's faithful servants. (For more information on the true identity of Melchizedek. write for our free reprint "The Mystery of Melchizedek Solved!")

4. What did Jacob, grandson of Abraham, promise God he would do with all of his increase? Gen. 28:20-22. Was he prospered? Gen. 30:43.

5. After Israel's deliverance from Egypt, God led them to Mt. Sinai. There He instructed Moses to formally write down His laws. Included was a command regarding the tithe. To whom and for what purpose were the people to tithe? Num. 18:22, 24.

Melchizedek (Christ, the "Lord" of the Old Testament) selected the Levites to be His ministers. But there was no commission to spread the Gospel at that time. The Levites were merely to teach the people the letter of God's laws, and to administer the rituals and sacrifices as reminders of sin. And the people were commanded to bring the tithe of their

produce to the Levites. Christ (Melchizedek) thus transferred receipt of the tithe to the Levitical priesthood for their support.

6. Does the seventh chapter of the book of Hebrews show that tithing is not ceremonial or Levitical, having originated before Levi was born" Heb. 7:5, 8-10.

Hebrews 7 makes clear that tithing was practiced long before God instituted ancient Israel's civil law through Moses. Because tithing did not begin with the Levites, it therefore did not end when the Levitical priesthood ended.

Rather, according to Hebrews 7 I I - I ', God changed the priesthood back to the spiritual priesthood of Melchizedek. The Levitical priesthood was replaced by the priesthood of Jesus Christ - the Melchizedek priesthood restored. Therefore, a change as to who should receive the tithe was also made (verse 12). Christ has authorized His New Testament ministry to accept the tithe to finance the spiritual work of God's Church!

The New Testament era was ushered in when Melchizedek (Christ), who abides as our High Priest continually (Heb. 7:3, 4:14-16), became mortal so He could be sacrificed for the sins of mankind and make the Holy Spirit available to those whom God calls.

7. What is Jesus Christ's commission to His ministry\_ '? Matt. 28:19-20, Mark 16:15. What Gospel would His ministers preach in this end time'? Matt. 24:14.

Jesus Christ came to establish a spiritual ministry. It is a ministry of salvation, of prophecy and of warning, as well as of good news - of prophesying His glorious return as world ruler to rescue mankind from self-annihilation and bring world peace.

In these chaotic days approaching the end of this age. God's Church is reaching millions of people around the world with Jesus Christ's message. It is a huge undertaking requiring not only financial support for hundreds of ministers and other laborers, but also the use of expensive technological facilities - radio, television, printing presses - for proclaiming Jesus' Gospel of the coming Kingdom of God "to all the nations"!

Today. God provides for the financing of the globe-girdling work of His Church by the same system He has used for millennia - the tithing system.

8. Did Jesus uphold God's law of tithing" Matt. 21:23, especially the last part of this verse.

How clear' Jesus said that spiritual qualities such as judgment. love, mercy and faith are more important than strictly paying tithes on every little plant that might grow in your garden -- especially when that strictness leads to self-righteousness. But Christ said not to leave the other undone --- not to fail to pay your full tithe as God requires.

9. Did the apostle Paul clearly show that Jesus' New Testament ministry is to be supported just as the Levites were in ancient Israel? I Cor. 9-7-14. especially verses 13 and 14.

10. How have people literally stolen from God" Mal. 3:7-1 2. especially verses 8 and 9.

Can anyone afford to rob God" Stealing from God is a serious matter!

Although tithing is giving God a tenth of one's income, that tenth is not Yours to give since it belongs to God.

in the Garden of Eden. God reserved just one tree [for Himself. Adam and Eve had no right to eat of it. But Satan convinced them that this tree was also theirs to use (Gen. 3:1-

6). When they took the fruit of that forbidden tree, they sinned -- they stole from God. We likewise sin today if we hold back the tenth of our income that belongs to God.

Today, the same devil wants us to believe that all of our income is ours. But don't believe it! God has put a "no-trespassing" sign on the first tenth of our earnings - it is reserved for

Him, to be used as He directs His ministry. It is our responsibility to acknowledge God's prior claim over that first tenth of our income by paying it to His representatives whom we have proved to be doing His work on earth.

11. What does one come under as a result of breaking this fundamental financial law of God? Mal. 3:9. How does one escape this financial curse? Verse 10.

12- What does God challenge us to do to prove Him - to see if He really will bless us? Verse 10, Prov. 3:9-10.

The simple equation is: Pay to God what you owe Him -- the tenth that is His and He will reward you with blessings. God does not promise to make you a millionaire, but if you work diligently and are faithful in returning His portion to Him. Making Him your financial partner, He will work with you and bless your efforts. God will cause your partnership with Him to prosper.

13. What should be our attitude in paying God's representatives the tenth that belongs to Him, and even in giving offerings (Mal- 3.8) as we are able? II Cor. 9:6-7.

A generous attitude is fundamental to God's "give" way of life. God is a generous giver! He wants His children to reflect a like generosity within their comparatively limited means.

14. Does God promise that there are automatic blessings for living His "give" way of life? Prov. 11:24-25. Luke 6:38, Gal. 6:7.

15. What great spiritual principles did Jesus Christ reveal about the use of our money? Matt. 6:19-21.

Storing up spiritual "treasures in heaven" is far more important than being prospered physically. But God promises both! Why not prove God by acting on this important law? Make God your financial partner. Put God's tithe, your offerings and your heart into the great purpose He is performing on the earth today and receive His blessing.

For a comprehensive study of the subject of tithing, send for our free booklet Ending Our Financial Worries.